

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3211

To authorize the Secretary of Education to provide grants to develop technologies to eliminate functional barriers to full independence for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 17 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 22), 2000

Mr. HARKIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Education to provide grants to develop technologies to eliminate functional barriers to full independence for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Technology for All
5 Americans Act of 2000”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
8 ings:

1 (1) Disability does not diminish an individual's
2 right to participate in the cultural, economic, edu-
3 cational, health care, political, and social main-
4 stream.

5 (2) Technology is a crucial factor in cultural,
6 economic, educational, health care, political, and so-
7 cial activity in the United States. The leadership of
8 the United States in the development and utilization
9 of technology is an important factor underlying the
10 strength of the economy and society of the United
11 States.

12 (3) The United States is entering a Technology
13 Revolution that is affecting, and will continue to af-
14 fect, every aspect of the daily lives of individuals in
15 the United States.

16 (4) Individuals with disabilities are nearly twice
17 as likely as individuals without disabilities to say
18 that the Internet has improved their lives.

19 (5) Although new technologies have improved
20 the lives of many individuals with disabilities in the
21 United States, there is a significant "Digital Divide"
22 between individuals with and without disabilities. In-
23 dividuals with disabilities are less than $\frac{1}{2}$ as likely
24 as individuals without disabilities to have access to

1 a computer at home and are barely $\frac{1}{4}$ as likely as
2 individuals without disabilities to use the Internet.

3 (6) The Digital Divide for individuals with dis-
4 abilities is exacerbated by the continuing divisions
5 between individuals with and without disabilities in
6 education, employment, income, and other areas.
7 Continuing efforts to remedy these other divisions
8 also will have a significant impact on the Digital Di-
9 vide.

10 (7) More and more each day, the ability of
11 every individual in the United States to participate
12 in society is determined by how well the individual
13 is able to use technology.

14 (8) The right of access to technology is a fun-
15 damental civil right.

16 (9) If the Internet and other technologies are
17 accessible, they will offer individuals with disabilities
18 unprecedented opportunities for independence and
19 self-sufficiency through education, health care, em-
20 ployment, and social interaction. Conversely, if the
21 technologies are not accessible, the lack of accessible
22 technologies will create new barriers to the inde-
23 pendence and self-sufficiency of individuals with dis-
24 abilities.

1 (10) History demonstrates that research on as-
2 sistive technology and other technology that is acces-
3 sible to and independently usable by individuals with
4 disabilities benefits everyone.

5 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to—

6 (1) maximize the potential of the United States
7 by closing the Digital Divide for individuals with dis-
8 abilities, and, as a result, increase the independence
9 and self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities
10 and further strengthen the United States economy
11 by enabling the greatest possible number of people
12 to contribute their abilities;

13 (2) provide incentives for public and private re-
14 searchers to use universal design and accessibility
15 principles in new technologies, and to develop tech-
16 nologies to eliminate functional barriers to full inde-
17 pendence for individuals with disabilities;

18 (3) increase public access to technology by pro-
19 viding grants to States to improve delivery of elec-
20 tronic and information technology used by public li-
21 braries, including libraries located in public elemen-
22 tary and secondary schools, that is accessible;

23 (4) increase the development and use of assist-
24 ive technology and other technology that is accessible
25 to and independently usable by individuals with dis-

1 abilities, including technology that incorporates the
2 principle of universal design, by providing grants to
3 colleges and universities to establish model curricula
4 incorporating the design and use of such tech-
5 nologies into academic and professional programs;

6 (5) help children with disabilities maximize
7 their potential in school and after graduation by en-
8 suring their access to technology to increase their
9 independence and self-sufficiency; and

10 (6) increase awareness of the needs of individ-
11 uals with disabilities among the officers and employ-
12 ees of Federal offices that do not specialize in dis-
13 ability policy.

14 **SEC. 3. GRANTS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.**

15 (a) **AUTHORITY TO AWARD GRANTS.**—The Secretary
16 of Education, after consultation with the Secretary of
17 Commerce, shall award grants to commercial, nonprofit,
18 or other organizations, or institutions of higher education,
19 for the research and development of assistive technology
20 and other technology that is accessible to and independ-
21 ently usable by individuals with disabilities, including tech-
22 nology that incorporates the principle of universal design,
23 to increase the independence and self-sufficiency of indi-
24 viduals with disabilities.

25 (b) **APPLICATION.**—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—An organization or institu-
2 tion desiring to receive a grant under this section
3 shall submit an application to the Secretary of Edu-
4 cation at such time, in such manner and, subject to
5 paragraph (2), containing such information as the
6 Secretary of Education may require.

7 (2) REQUIRED INFORMATION.—An organization
8 or institution desiring to receive a grant under this
9 section shall include in the application the following:

10 (A) A statement of how the technology
11 proposed to be developed would increase the
12 independence and self-sufficiency of individuals
13 with disabilities by increasing the participation
14 of those individuals in the area of culture, the
15 economy (including employment), education,
16 health care, political participation, or social
17 interaction.

18 (B) An assessment of the current level (as
19 of the date of submission of the application) of
20 use of assistive technology and other technology
21 that is accessible to and independently usable
22 by individuals with disabilities, including tech-
23 nology that incorporates the principles of uni-
24 versal design, in the area to which the grant
25 proposal contained in the application relates.

1 (C) An assessment of how the technology
2 proposed to be developed could be made avail-
3 able to the greatest number of individuals with
4 disabilities.

5 (D) Such other information as the Sec-
6 retary of Education determines to be appro-
7 priate.

8 (c) STRATEGIC PLAN.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education,
10 after consultation with the Secretary of Commerce,
11 the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the
12 Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and
13 the Secretary of Labor, shall develop a strategic plan
14 for awarding grants under subsection (a) that is de-
15 signed to ensure that, in combination, the grants will
16 result in the greatest possible increase in independ-
17 ence and self-sufficiency for individuals with disabil-
18 ities.

19 (2) PURPOSES.—The Secretary of Education,
20 after consultation with the Secretary of Commerce,
21 the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the
22 Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and
23 the Secretary of Labor, shall develop the strategic
24 plan in a manner that furthers the purposes of this

1 Act, particularly the purpose described in section
 2 2(b)(6).

3 (d) REPORTS.—

4 (1) PROGRESS.—An organization or institution
 5 that receives a grant under this section shall annu-
 6 ally prepare and submit to the Secretary of Edu-
 7 cation a report describing the progress of the organi-
 8 zation or institution in developing assistive tech-
 9 nology or other technology that is accessible to and
 10 independently usable by individuals with disabilities,
 11 including technology that incorporates the principle
 12 of universal design.

13 (2) BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary of Edu-
 14 cation shall compile and distribute to the recipients
 15 described in paragraph (1) and other interested par-
 16 ties a report that describes the best practices of the
 17 recipients in developing technology described in
 18 paragraph (1).

19 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
 20 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
 21 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years
 22 2001 through 2005.

23 **SEC. 4. GRANTS TO STATES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES.**

24 (a) AUTHORITY TO AWARD GRANTS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education
 2 (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall
 3 award grants to States to improve delivery of elec-
 4 tronic and information technology, including com-
 5 puters and Internet access, used by public libraries,
 6 including libraries located in public elementary and
 7 secondary schools, that is accessible.

8 (2) PROCESS.—The Secretary shall establish a
 9 process for awarding grants under paragraph (1)
 10 that furthers the purposes of this Act, particularly
 11 the purpose described in section 2(b)(6).

12 (b) APPLICATION.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—A State that desires to re-
 14 ceive a grant under this section shall submit an ap-
 15 plication to the Secretary at such time, in such man-
 16 ner and, subject to paragraph (2), containing such
 17 information as the Secretary may require.

18 (2) REQUIRED INFORMATION.—A State that
 19 desires to receive a grant under this section shall in-
 20 clude in the application the following:

21 (A) A statement of the State’s plan of op-
 22 eration for—

23 (i) improving delivery of electronic
 24 and information technology, including com-
 25 puters and Internet access, used by the

State's public libraries, including libraries located in public elementary and secondary schools in the State, that incorporates assistive technology or other technology that is accessible to and independently usable by individuals with disabilities, including technology that incorporates the principle of universal design; and

(ii) providing for training library staff at the State's public libraries in electronic and information technology.

(B) A statement that the grant proposal contained in the application was developed with the full and meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities, and the family members, guardians, advocates, and authorized representatives of those individuals.

(C) Such other information as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(c) REPORTS.—

(1) PROGRESS.—A State that receives a grant under this section shall annually prepare and submit to the Secretary a report describing the progress of the State in achieving the goals for which the grant is awarded.

1 (2) BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall
2 compile and distribute to the recipients described in
3 paragraph (1) and other interested parties a report
4 that describes the best practices of the recipients in
5 achieving the goals for which the grant is awarded.

6 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
7 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
8 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years
9 2001 through 2005.

10 **SEC. 5. GRANTS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

11 (a) AUTHORITY TO AWARD GRANTS.—The Secretary
12 of Education (referred to in this section as the “Sec-
13 retary”) shall award grants to institutions of higher edu-
14 cation for the purpose of incorporating the principles of
15 assistive technology and other technology that is accessible
16 to and independently usable by individuals with disabil-
17 ities, including technology that incorporates the principle
18 of universal design, into—

19 (1) curricula of academic programs that will en-
20 courage the design of such technologies, such as en-
21 gineering and computer science; and

22 (2) curricula of academic programs that will en-
23 courage awareness of the availability of such tech-
24 nologies, and understanding of the best uses of such
25 technologies among professionals who work with in-

1 individuals with disabilities, including professionals in
2 the fields of education, medicine, and social work.

3 (b) PROCESS.—The Secretary shall establish a proc-
4 ess for awarding grants under subsection (a) that furthers
5 the purposes of this Act, particularly the purpose de-
6 scribed in section 2(b)(6).

7 (c) APPLICATION.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—An institution of higher edu-
9 cation that desires to receive a grant under this sec-
10 tion shall submit an application to the Director at
11 such time, in such manner and, subject to paragraph
12 (2), containing such information as the Director
13 may require.

14 (2) REQUIRED INFORMATION.—An institution
15 of higher education that desires to receive a grant
16 under this section shall include in the application a
17 statement that the grant proposal contained in the
18 application was developed with the full and meaning-
19 ful participation of individuals with disabilities, and
20 the family members, guardians, advocates, and au-
21 thorized representatives of those individuals.

22 (d) REPORTS.—

23 (1) PROGRESS.—An institution that receives a
24 grant under this section shall annually prepare and
25 submit to the Secretary a report describing the

1 progress of the institution in incorporating the prin-
 2 ciples of assistive technology and other technology
 3 that is accessible to and independently usable by in-
 4 dividuals with disabilities, including technology that
 5 incorporates the principle of universal design, into a
 6 wide range of curricula.

7 (2) BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall
 8 compile and distribute to the recipients described in
 9 paragraph (1) and other interested parties a report
 10 that describes the best practices of the recipients in
 11 incorporating the principles described in paragraph
 12 (1) into a wide range of curricula.

13 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
 14 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
 15 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years
 16 2001 through 2005.

17 **SEC. 6. GRANTS TO STATES TO INCORPORATE TECH-**
 18 **NOLOGY INTO THE LIVES OF CHILDREN WITH**
 19 **DISABILITIES.**

20 (a) AUTHORITY TO AWARD GRANTS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education
 22 (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall
 23 award grants to State educational agencies for dem-
 24 onstration projects to promote the incorporation of
 25 technology into children with disabilities’ education

1 and transition from school to work, to increase their
2 independence and self-sufficiency.

3 (2) PROCESS.—The Secretary shall establish a
4 process for awarding grants under paragraph (1)
5 that furthers the purposes of this Act, particularly
6 the purpose described in section 2(b)(6).

7 (b) APPLICATION.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—A State educational agency
9 that desires to receive a grant under this section
10 shall submit an application to the Secretary at such
11 time, in such manner and, subject to paragraph (2),
12 containing such information as the Secretary may
13 require.

14 (2) REQUIRED INFORMATION.—A State edu-
15 cational agency that desires to receive a grant under
16 this section shall include in the application the fol-
17 lowing:

18 (A) A plan for working with other State
19 and local agencies that have responsibility for
20 working with individuals with disabilities, and
21 local school districts, to develop model programs
22 for incorporation of technology into children
23 with disabilities' education and transition from
24 school to work, to increase their independence
25 and self-sufficiency.

1 (B) A description of proposed training of
2 teachers, and other individuals who work with
3 children with disabilities, in—

4 (i) the availability of assistive tech-
5 nology or other technology that is acces-
6 sible to and independently usable by indi-
7 viduals with disabilities, including tech-
8 nology that incorporates the principle of
9 universal design; and

10 (ii) the incorporation of the tech-
11 nology described in clause (i) to fulfill the
12 goals described in subparagraph (A).

13 (C) A statement that—

14 (i) the grant proposal contained in the
15 application was developed with the full and
16 meaningful participation of individuals
17 with disabilities, and the family members,
18 guardians, advocates, and authorized rep-
19 resentatives of those individuals; and

20 (ii) the persons described in clause (i)
21 will be equally involved with the ongoing
22 implementation of the technology incorpo-
23 ration program.

24 (c) REPORTS.—

1 (1) PROGRESS.—An agency that receives a
2 grant under this section shall prepare and submit to
3 the Secretary a report describing the progress of the
4 agency in incorporating technology into children with
5 disabilities' education and transition from school to
6 work, to improve their independence and self-suffi-
7 ciency.

8 (2) BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall
9 compile and distribute to the recipients described in
10 paragraph (1) and other interested parties a report
11 that describes the best practices of the recipients in
12 incorporating technology into children with disabil-
13 ities' education and transition from school to work,
14 to improve their independence and self-sufficiency.

15 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
16 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
17 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years
18 2001 through 2005.

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